

REMARKS

All pending claims have been rejected in the Office Action of August 9, 2007. In particular, the claims are rejected as follows: claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by US Patent No. 6,011,929 to Fuke et al. (hereinafter "Fuke"); claims 3, 5-11, 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Fuke in view of US Published Application No. US2002/0089601 to Fumio et al. (hereinafter "Fumio"); and claims 4 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Fuke in view of Fumio and further in view of US Patent No. 6,823,129 to Kobayashi (hereinafter "Kobayashi"). Also, claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as indefinite. In response, Applicant submits amended claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 15 and 16. New dependent claim 17 has been added and claims 2, 6 and 11 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-5, 7-10 and 12-17 are currently pending.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 7, 8, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as indefinite. Applicant has amended each of those claims for proper antecedent basis. Applicant respectfully submits that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph have been overcome.

Rejection Of Claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Fuke.

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify Applicant's claimed inventions. Beginning, with claim 1, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the lighting element is an LED. Secondly, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the limitation of canceled claim 2, namely, the guide. With respect to the guide, claim 1 now recites that "the guide has an opening section that is equal to the emission area of the LED, and the opening section is disposed in proximity of the emission area or in contact with the emission area." Similar amendments have been made to independent claims 3 and 10.

Claim 1 as amended is now readily distinguishable over the cited prior art. First, use of an LED results in a smaller and thinner flash unit than a unit using a non-LED such as a xenon tube.

Applicant notes that Fuke does not disclose use of an LED. Second, the guide, as claimed is not disclosed in the cited prior art, including Fuke.

By way of background, a xenon tube is typically cylindrical (See cylindrical tube 3 in Fuke) and light is dispersed in radial directions. To address this dispersion, the back side of the xenon tube is covered by a guide that increases the thickness of a flash unit. See FIG. 1 wherein the back side of a flash discharge tube (3) is covered by a reflector (2). Moreover, all pending claims requiring one side of the light condensing plate to have "a convexo-concave surface." None of the cited references disclose such a surface, including Fuke. The Office Action points to surface 7 in Fuke as a convexo-concave surface. However, this is not correct since it is described as made of concentric curved faces. See, e.g, Figure 2c of Fuke.

In contrast, the claimed LED and guide of claims 1, 3 and 10 can significantly reduce the size of a flash unit. Since the LED (See item 2 of Applicant's drawings) is a device implemented on a substrate. A guide (See item 5 of Applicant's drawings) surrounds a light-emitting area of the LED while the guide (5) does not cover the back side of the LED (2). Instead, the guide has an opening through which light can pass while not being blocked by the guide (5). (See claims 1, 3 and 10 "the guide has an opening section that is equal to the emission area of the LED, and the opening section is disposed in proximity of the emission area or in contact with the emission area."). The claimed invention can reduce the thickness of the flash unit while maintaining effective light emission.

None of the cited prior art discloses or suggests the combination of the LED and the guide shape of the claimed invention and cannot be easily, (i.e., obviously) achieved from the prior art. Therefore, the Applicant believes that claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claim 2 has been canceled so the rejection has been rendered moot.

Rejection Of Remaining Claims As Obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 3, 5-11, 13-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Fuke in view of Fumio, and claims 4 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable

over Fuke in view of Fumio and further in view of Kobayashi. Those claims are not rendered obvious for the reasons noted above, namely, that none of the cited prior art discloses or suggest the combination of the LED and the guide shape, as claimed, and that combination is not obvious over the prior art. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-5, 7-10 and 12-17 are allowable over the cited prior art.

DRAWINGS

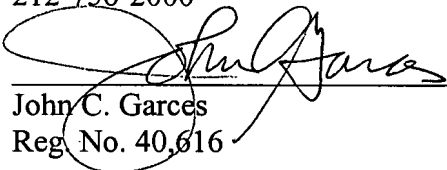
Submitted herewith is the Replacement Sheet including Figs. 8A, 8B, 9A and 9B now bearing the legend "Prior Art".

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and prompt allowance of this application are respectfully requested. The Examiner is urged to telephone Applicant's undersigned counsel at the number noted below if it will advance the prosecution of this application, or with any suggestion to resolve any condition that would impede allowance. In the event that any extension of time is required, Applicant petitions for that extension of time required to make this response timely. Kindly charge any additional fee, or credit any surplus, to Deposit Account No. 50-0675, Order No. 848075-0075.

Respectfully submitted,

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